

LEADER'S CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the 96th Meeting held at 5.00 p.m.  
on Wednesday, 18th February 1976, in the  
Leader's Room at the House of Commons

Present: Mrs. Thatcher (in the Chair)

Mr. Whitelaw, Sir Keith Joseph  
Lord Hailsham, Mr. Maudling  
Sir Geoffrey Howe, Mr. Prior  
Mr. Pym, Mr. Gilmour  
Mr. Jenkin, Mr. Peyton  
Mr. St. John-Stevan, Mr. Heseltine  
Mr. Raison, Mr. Maude  
Mr. Buchanan-Smith, Mr. Edwards  
Mr. Neave, Mr. Biffen  
Lord Thornycroft

Mr. Atkins

In attendance: Lord Aberdare, Mr. Higgins  
Mr. Onslow, Mr. Butler  
Mr. Stanley, Mr. Douglas  
Mr. Ridley, Mr. Nicholson

Apologies: Lord Carrington, Mrs. Oppenheim

1. Proposed Business for the Week 23rd February - 1st March

On Monday 23rd February there would be the Second Reading of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (Mr. Speed) followed by a Motion on EEC Documents R/2662/75 and R/2663/75 on Nuclear Safety (Mr. Biffen, Mr. Normanton).

On Tuesday 24th February Mr. Weetch would seek leave to introduce his Solicitors Act 1974 (Amendment) Bill under the 10 Minute Rule. This would be followed by a Supply Day with subject to be decided.

On Wednesday 25th February Sir Brandon Rhys Williams would seek leave to introduce his Companies Bill under the 10 Minute Rule. This would be followed by the Remaining Stages of the Post Office (Banking Services) Bill (Mr. King, Mr. Marshall) and a Motion on the Civil Aviation Policy Guidelines (Command No. 6400) (Mr. Higgins).

On Thursday 26th February there would be the Second Reading of the Atomic Energy Authority (Special Constables) Bill followed at 7.00 p.m. by Opposed Private Business: the Second Reading of the British Transport Docks (Felixstowe) Bill.

On Friday 27th February there would be Second Readings of Private Members' Bills, the bills being those of Mr. MacCormick, Mr. K. Clarke, Mr. Shersby and Mr. Bidwell.

On Monday 1st March there would be the Second Reading of the Road Traffic (Seat Belts) Bill (Mr. Fowler).

2. Subject for the Supply Day

There was a discussion. It was agreed that we would debate East-West relations on a Motion for the Adjournment.

3. Matters Arising on Business

It was agreed that:

- i) We should seek to have a full day's debate on the Motion on the Civil Aviation Policy Guidelines, at present fixed for Wednesday 25th February. There would be a whip in support of a specific amendment on the Laker Airways' Sky Train.
- ii) There would be no whip on the Second Reading of the British Transport Docks (Felixstowe) Bill, and Mr. Raison or Mr. Fowler would speak during the debate from the Front Bench.
- iii) There could be a free vote on the Second Reading of the Road Traffic (Seat Belts) Bill on 1st March on which Mr. Fowler would put both sides of the case while also stating his personal view.
- iv) We would not normally have a whip on Private Business: the West Midlands County Council Bill was regarded as an exception to this general rule.

4. House of Lords Business

Lord Aberdare reported on the position regarding the Remaining Stages in the Lords of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Amendment) Bill, on which Lord Hailsham was to move an amendment widening the grounds on which compensation might be obtained for unfair dismissal in a closed shop situation. There was a discussion.

It was agreed that:

- i) Lord Aberdare would assess the views of the Independent Unionist Peers as to whether they should, or should not, press the amendment to a vote. If there was any doubt as to the general view, he would discuss the matter with Mrs. Thatcher.
- ii) The Conservatives in the Lords would not vote against the Third Reading of the Bill or seek to obstruct its passage in any way other than with regard to Lord Hailsham's amendment.

5. Other Business

It was agreed that members of the LCC would coordinate with Sir Geoffrey Howe their comments on the proposed expenditure cuts to be announced the following afternoon.

It was noted that Mrs. Thatcher's office would let Mr. Peter Hardiman-Scott of the BBC have a list of all members of the LCC, together with their No. 2 spokesmen, where appropriate, to ensure that when the BBC wanted official comments from the Conservative Party they possessed a list of whom to contact. It was also noted that a group photograph of the Shadow Cabinet would be taken at the meeting on Wednesday 3rd March.

It was agreed that Mr. Gilmour's paper on the Cost of Defence would be discussed on Wednesday 25th February and direct elections would be discussed at a later meeting.

The meeting closed at 6.10 p.m.